

preserved to be pasted on the inside of the coffin of our planet/ Such excessive preoccupation with the macabre may seem affected; yet the reader who looks back at that cadaverous portrait, and forward to the last scene at Zurich, must surely admit that the affectation, if such it was, went deep. But his fancy does not always glimmer thus coldly like a glow-worm on a grave; its flames can dance gaily enough, though still perhaps with a slight breath of sulphur: 'Dear Kelsall I have been in the native land of the unicorn about a week . . . I had no time to visit Procter . . . but am told that he is appointed to a high office in the government in the kingdom of ye moon.' Such is Beddoes' way of conveying his own arrival in England and Procter's new Commissionership of Lunacy. Or he will write home of a castle at Gottingen: 'The date of the tower is said to be 963: if this be true, it may have earned a citizenship among the semi-eternal stony populace of the planet; at all events it will be older than some hills which pretend to be natural and carry trees and houses/ Just so might another meta-physical physician have brooded two centuries before; we should feel how characteristic was such an idea if we found it in a letter written home by Sir Thomas Browne to Norwich. But there is a more flashing fancy than

Browne's at work when Beddoes turns to
describe fire-
flies at Milan: 'as if the swift wheeling of the
earth struck
fire out of the black atmosphere; as if the
winds were be-
ing set upon this planetary grindstone, and
gave out such
momentary sparks from their edges'. It
might be a de-
scription of his own poetry. How many poets
one might
search from cover to cover without finding
anything as
brilliant as that round grindstone of a
world!

Those, then, who know the poetry of
Beddoes will
have no difficulty in recognising the fainter
shadow of his